

APPROVAL PROCEDURE

Introduction

1. Any laboratory that will offer a suitable calibration service, and is prepared to comply with the general conditions and with any special conditions issued by the Director, B.C.S., may apply for approval for specified classes of measurement.

2. A laboratory is approved by the Director, B.C.S., as offering an authenticated calibration service for a specified range of measurements traceable to national standards. The laboratory may issue certificates, signed by approved signatories, bearing the B.C.S. badge.

Meaning of 'B.C.S. Approved Laboratory'

3. The approval of a laboratory relates solely to the measuring and calibrating ability of the laboratory within the range covered by the approval documents; it does not relate to the organisation's products, its general inspection arrangements or its other activities, or to the general operating conditions in any factory, laboratory or place.

Meaning of 'Head of Laboratory'

4. The term 'Head of Laboratory', as used in connection with B.C.S. approval, refers to the person responsible for running the laboratory and for the results achieved therein. He is the person, within his own organisation, who is responsible for operating the laboratory in accordance with the rules of the B.C.S.; therefore his standing, independence and integrity are of vital importance. The right of direct communication from the Head of Laboratory to the B.C.S. H.Q. (and vice versa) is implicit in the approval of a laboratory.

Criteria for laboratory approval

5. Assessment of a laboratory for approval will include consideration of the following aspects:-

- (a) laboratory staff
- (b) laboratory environmental conditions
- (c) laboratory equipment, its maintenance and the traceability of its calibrations to the National Standards
- (d) records system
- (e) ability to provide adequate, efficient and speedy services to customers
- (f) measurement procedures
- (g) measurement capability

These aspects vary according to the field of measurement, and the requirements are set out separately for each field of measurement. Further information will gladly be given, and personal discussion at B.C.S. H.Q. is welcomed.

Approval for more than one field of measurement

6. Approval may be sought for measurement within more than one field. In such a case, and in order that each field may be covered by suitably qualified specialists, it will normally be necessary to consider the application as for a separate approval for each of the fields of measurement listed in Publication 0021, or a sub-division thereof.

Applications for laboratory approval

7. A preliminary enquiry should be made by the applicant. This is best made by completing the Participation Enquiry form. On receipt of this enquiry at B.C.S. H.Q., guidance will be given to the applicant.

8. Formal application for approval will be made by completing the 'Application for Laboratory Approval', and the 'Application for Laboratory Approval (Personal Details)' forms, and sending them to B.C.S. H.Q.

9. Information given in support of an application will be treated in confidence, and will not be divulged to any other persons than those directly concerned with the approval. If approval is granted, the approved information as required for the operation of the service will be published. If approval is not granted, then no information will be divulged.

Assessment of laboratory

10. The names of the members of the inspection team will be made known to the applicant before the visit, and any objection to those nominated will be considered carefully at B.C.S. H.Q. The date and time of the visit will also be agreed with the applicant, who must arrange for the presence of the head of the laboratory and of the signatories during the visit.

11. The time taken by the inspection team will depend on the size of the laboratory and the intricacy of the work. The inspection team may require the performance of various tests.

12. The criteria for laboratory approval listed in paragraph 5 will be assessed in detail, the main considerations being as follows:-

- (a) The adequacy, qualifications and experience of the staff in relation to the precision, intricacy and range of the work; the independence and authority of the head of the laboratory, and the supervisory arrangements within the laboratory.
- (b) The laboratory environmental conditions in relation to the work, (these requirements are specified in the publication covering the field of measurement concerned).

- (c) The laboratory equipment, its maintenance and the traceability of its calibrations to the national standards; the equipment shall at a sufficiently recent date have been calibrated in terms of acceptable standards, and found satisfactory; a formal list of key equipment, together with its operating conditions, will be required.
- (d) The recording system, the arrangements for checking results and for tracing each calibration to the operator concerned; the identification of the instruments to the certificates issued.
- (e) Ability to provide adequate, efficient and speedy service to customers.
- (f) Measurement procedures.
- (g) Measurement capability.

Proposed Calibration Certificates

13. The layout of the certificates to be issued by the laboratory in reporting the results of calibrations or tests (see Publication 0103) carried out under the B.C.S. auspices will have to be discussed and agreed with the inspection teams.

Consideration of approval

14. All aspects of the application, including the assessors' reports, will be considered at B.C.S. H.Q., and a recommendation will be made to the Director, B.C.S., who will

- (a) approve the application
- or (b) inform the applicant that, when certain (specified) things have been put right, the application will be approved.
- or (c) advise the applicant that approval cannot be given and why.

15. Every attempt will be made to help a laboratory to reach the required standard. In the event of a refusal of approval, no public notification of this fact will be made, but the decision of the Director, B.C.S., to refuse an application (at any stage of consideration) is final. In such an event, a further application in respect of the same laboratory will not normally be accepted for 12 months from the date of consideration.

Grant of approval

16. On granting approval, the Director, B.C.S., will issue an Approval Certificate which will identify the operating organisation and the laboratory. The Approval Certificate (which will normally have a date of expiry two years

from the date of issue) will authorise the laboratory to undertake calibrations in accordance with B.C.S. rules, and within the terms of schedules relating to the particular laboratory.

17. The schedules will be attached permanently to the certificate, and will list the types of measurement for which the laboratory is approved, and related matters.

18. A B.C.S. directory of approved laboratories will give the name and address of each approved laboratory, with the name of the head of the laboratory, together with the range of measurements for which approval had been granted. This list will be revised as frequently as practicable and will be available from B.C.S. H.Q.

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